

TALK WITH COMITADJI IN BALKANS

U. P. Correspondent Interviews One
of Fierce Band in Serbia Who
is Former Resident of
Pittsburg, U. S. A.

BOMB THROWING BORDER FIGHTERS

Perform Scouting and Patrol Service
in Mountain and Forest; Tough
Men Inured to Life of
Hardships

By WILLIAM G. SHEPHERD,
U. P. staff correspondent.

MONASTIR, Serbia, Dec. 2.—(By mail.) Comitadjis are supposed to be the toughest, killingest men in the Balkans, perhaps in the world. They're the border fighters of the various Balkan states; Texas rangers are gentle alongside them; Northwestern mounted police, gentlemen. At last I've had a talk with a real live comitadj of the Serbian breed. One part of his conversation went like this:

"We went up to a house the other night in which there were forty-two Bulgarian comitadjis. They fired at us and refused to surrender, so one of us threw a bomb. Just like this one—'holding out an iron box the size of a cake of soap'—and blew up the place. It killed twenty-eight and wounded the rest." Another part of his conversation ran:

"Did you read Tolstoy's prediction of this great war?" He pulled a soiled clipping from his pocket and read what Tolstoy had written in 1912—there would be a great war in Europe and a writing man from the north would arise and hold the world in his grip for the next ten years, after ending the war. "Do you know who I thought this great man might be? Roosevelt. He writes, you know. But 1915 is almost over."

He was a man of contrasts, this Serbian comitadj. With his rifle, his revolver his bag of bombs, each of which could blow up a house, he talked to me about the dangers of typhus and other Serbian diseases. "I drink all the water that comes my way. It can't hurt me. I don't believe in sickness, you know. I'm a Christian scientist."

"Have you ever been in the United States?"

"Oh, yes. I've traveled everywhere."

He told me about the comitadjis he lived with.

"Comitadjis aren't regular soldiers," he said. "They're volunteers who guard the frontiers. A good many of them are men tired of everything else in life and who are too cowardly to commit suicide. For instance, in our company of twenty men there's a young fellow from Nish. Six years ago he fell in love with a girl there and she told him she would marry him if he would go to the states and bring back some money. So he went to Portland, Oregon and saved two thousand dollars in five years. That's a little fortune in Serbia. He hurried back to Nish. When he reached home he found the girl had married. He spent all his money drinking in the cafes and when he was broke he joined the comitadjis. Fellows like him are tough fighters; they don't care what happens to them."

"What do comitadjis do in the great war?"

"Whatever the army doesn't do. Scouting, patrolling, entering villages before the army and mountain and forest fighting. We have some good times, too. The other night we'd been on duty all day and when night came on it was raining. We were near a village where some Bulgarian comitadjis were supposed to be, so a few of us went into the village while the others remained on the outskirts. Pretty soon we heard about fifty shots, and then the shooting stopped. We hustled into the town. We found that the patrol had killed nothing but one big sheep. That sheep was skinned in ten minutes. The fellows ran around for wood. Where they got it I don't know, but before long we had a great big fire going and one of our fellows who used to be a cook in a Belgrade cafe stuck a pole

through the sheep lengthwise and put it over the fire. In about an hour it was ready and with plenty of pepper and salt and black bread and coffee we had a better meal than I ever bought in New York. Then, about 11 o'clock we stretched out with full stomachs, with our big loaves of bread for pillows and I had the best sleep I've ever had in my life. Oh, we know how to make ourselves comfortable."

"I've seen some of these soldiers from England and France who are just coming to the Balkans, pass some terrible nights just because they didn't know how to rough it. I was scouting for some English troops the other night. We'd been in the rain all day and late in the evening we had waded a creek up to our waists. Finally we reached the top of a hill and the commander ordered his men to halt. It was 9 o'clock."

"Take off your kits and sleep where you stand," ordered the officer. "Comitadjis wouldn't have done that. A comitadj officer would have stopped his men behind the hill, let them build a fire, kill a sheep somewhere and make coffee."

"Does Christian Science help you with the vermin?" I asked. "Well," he said, "I pick them off like all the others do. 'Want to see a bomb?'" He handed out a gun metal colored object that looked like a small drinking cup with a screw top. "You unscrew the top," and he did so, "and find this brass tip, which you strike on the butt of your gun. That fires the fuse. You count seven, slowly, then throw the (Continued on Page Three.)"

PRESIDENT WILSON 59

By United Press.

HOT SPRINGS, Va., Dec. 28.—President Wilson celebrated his fifty-ninth birthday today quietly with his bride. The only indication that the executive has passed another milestone was the scores of telegrams from his friends in all parts of the world.

In health and spirit the president is many years younger than fifty-nine. His hair is quite grey, but he stands erect, 5 feet 11 inches in his stocking feet. Recently he tipped the scales at 171 pounds. He walks a great deal and plays lots of golf. Woodrow Wilson was born at Staunton, Va., December 28, 1856. His father was the Rev. Joseph R. Wilson, a distinguished scholar and clergyman of the south, and his mother, Jessie Woodrow Wilson. His ancestry on both sides is Scotch-Irish.

SLEET HITS SO. WEST

By United Press.

DALLAS, Dec. 28.—A sleet storm and low temperatures hit the south west during the past twenty-four hours, according to dispatches reaching here from many points today.

The sleet storm extended as far south as Austin and Taylor and snow was reported at Fort Worth and Abilene.

A precipitation of 1.14 inches was recorded at Trinidad. The lowest temperature reached here last night was 25 degrees above zero.

LAST ROUND OF SANTA C. AT P.O.

The work of the distributing agency which Santa Claus has maintained in the Chickasha postoffice for the past ten days, will be cleared up this afternoon. For a week Postmaster Barefoot has kept wagons running early and late in an earnest effort to keep abreast with the distribution of the enormous packages which the good old patron saint of all children has fired into this office.

This morning Postmaster Barefoot and Assistant Postmaster McKenzie stated that the closing of the office this evening would see the last bundle delivered at the proper address. And no one of the numerous employees of the Chickasha postoffice will regret this. All connected with the office have worked hard and faithfully during the past ten days and will be glad for just a little "breathing spell" now.

TO SETTLE SUBMARINE QUESTION

Austrian Reply Coming This Week
to Be "Satisfactory and Final;"
French Liner Torpedoed
in Mediterranean

SWEDEN TAKES TO FORD PEACE PLAN

Enthusiastic Meeting is Held and
Press Comment is Favorable;
Czar Asks Roumania
to Join Allies

By United Press.

BERLIN, Dec. 28.—From authoritative sources the United Press learns today that the entire controversy in regard to submarine warfare as it affects the United States may be cleared up within the next few days.

Ambassador Penfield at Vienna, it is reported, will be handed the Austrian reply to the second Ancona note this week. Assurances that come from reliable sources say the answer will be "satisfactory and final."

After French General.

By United Press.

PARIS, Dec. 28.—The French liner Ville de la Ciotat was torpedoed in the Mediterranean, because it was believed that General Castelnau, chief of staff of the French army, was on board, according to the opinion expressed here.

General Castelnau recently conferred with the allied generals at Salonika. He was last reported at Athens.

Russ Sink Submarine.

By United Press.

PETROGRAD, Dec. 28.—An official announcement issued here today says the Russian destroyer Gromky sank an enemy submarine off the Bulgarian coast of the Black Sea.

Warming Up to Ford Mission.

By United Press.

STOCKHOLM, Dec. 28.—The people of Sweden, in contrast with the condition encountered at Christiania, are warming up to the Ford peace mission.

The leaders of the Ford party delivered addresses last night at the most enthusiastic meeting that has been held since the party left New York. The editorial comment of the local papers this morning was favorable to ward the peace expedition.

Sends Personal Request.

By United Press.

ROME, Dec. 28.—According to information reaching here Czar Nicholas of Russia has sent Ambassador Scheloko to Roumania with a personal request to the latter to join with the allies in the war on the central powers.

Operation for Kait.

By United Press.

LONDON, Dec. 28.—Dispatches coming from Switzerland today say that an operation will be performed on the Kaisers' throat within a few days. Berlin gives no confirmation of the report.

Whitlock Returns.

By United Press.

NEW YORK, Dec. 28.—The Holland-American liner Rotterdam sailed today for Europe with Colonel House, Captain Boyed and Brand Whitlock, minister to Belgium, on board.

Colonel House will put the American ambassadors in close touch with the American attitude toward international affairs. He denied that he was going on a peace mission.

Sensational Rumors.

By United Press.

BERLIN, Dec. 28.—Sensational rumors are current in northern Italy, including a report that the king was wounded by an Austrian grenade, and is in a hospital.

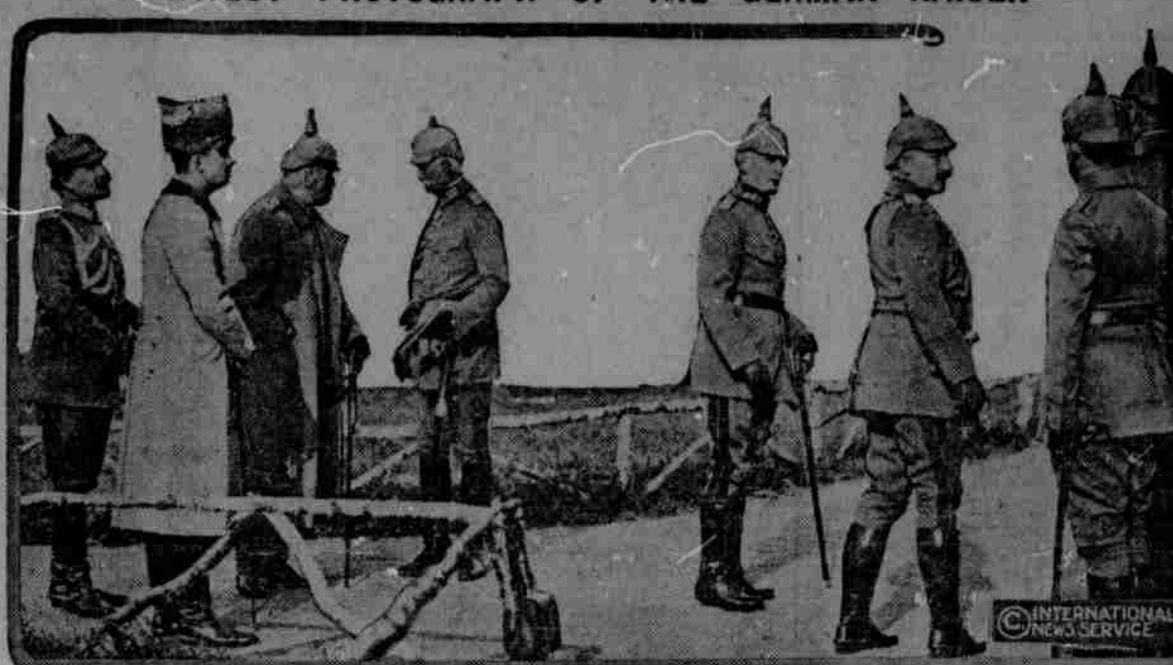
Another rumor says an Italian general who was close to the king was executed for maintaining relations with the enemy.

Predicts German Victory.

By United Press.

DALLAS, Dec. 28.—Field Marshall von Mackensen predicts that the war

LATEST PHOTOGRAPH OF THE GERMAN KAISER



In this, the latest photograph of the kaiser to come from the front, the German ruler, seen near the right, is about to enter the officers' headquarters in the Champagne region.

MOTION TO DISMISS IS DENIED

By United Press.

NEW YORK, Dec. 27.—The case of the directors of the New Haven railroad, who have been on trial here for several weeks, must be decided by a jury.

This was the decision of Federal Judge Hunt, who today announced his ruling, denying the motion of attorneys for the defense to dismiss indictments against eleven former directors and the present directors of the New Haven company, charging violation of the laws against conspiracy to monopolize the transportation business in New England.

The court held that the case must go to the jury. The government has completed its case and the defense is expected to occupy many weeks in the presentation of its evidence.

SHOT NEAR NINNEKAH

A. M. Grdon, who resides at the home of his father, H. M. Gordon, near Ninneka, was received at the Chickasha hospital yesterday afternoon suffering from gunshot wound accidentally inflicted by a younger brother while hunting on Christmas day.

Dr. Cox of Ninneka accompanied the young man to the hospital, following the operation that was found necessary, young Gordon is reported resting easily this afternoon.

Morris in Serious Condition.

Rosco Morris, the 15-year-old boy brought to the Chickasha hospital yesterday afternoon from Mountain View, mentioned of which appeared in Monday's issue of the Express, is reported in a serious condition. The boy is suffering from an accidentally inflicted gunshot wound and is not expected to survive.

Other speakers tonight will be:

Enos Mill, Estes Park, Colo.; Mrs. John Dickinson Sherman, Chicago; Gilbert H. Grosvenor, Washington; R. B. Marshall, Washington; Richard B. Watrous, Washington; Dr. H. O. Reik, Baltimore, and Robert S. Yard, of the interior department.

Shooting in St. Joseph Gambling House Fatal

By United Press.

ST. JOSEPH, Mo., Dec. 28.—Dick Wade, the proprietor of a local gambling house shot and killed "Skate" Young and seriously wounded John Lappy of Tulsa, Okla.

Wade alleges that the two men attempted to rob him last night.

Dallas Greek Suicides.

By United Press.

DALLAS, Dec. 28.—A. H. Edanou, a Greek fruit dealer, drank carbolic acid and jumped from the third floor of the Ozark hotel. He lived two hours. It is alleged that financial difficulties drove him to desperation.

WEATHER FORECAST. For Oklahoma.

Fair tonight and Wednesday, rising temperature Wednesday and in west portion tonight.

Local Temperature.

During 24 hours ending 8 a. m. to-day:

Maximum, 29 degrees.

Minimum, 20 degrees.

MISS WILSON TO PARTICIPATE IN CIVIC MEETING

By United Press.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 28.—The eleventh annual convention of the American Civic Association was convened here today by men and women prominent in social and scientific work. Miss Margaret Wilson, daughter of the president, is to take a prominent part in the sessions. The convention is simultaneous with those of the American Historical Association, American Society of International Law, American Political Science Association, American Sociological Society, American Association for Labor Legislation and the Pan-American Scientific Congress.

At the morning meeting Mrs. Percy V. Pennybacker, Austin, Texas, president of the General Federation of Women's Clubs; Clinton Rogers Woodruff, Philadelphia, secretary of the National Municipal League; Frederick Law Olmsted, Brookline, Mass., chairman of the National Conference on City Planning; Dr. Henry Sturgis Drinker, president of Lehigh University and of the American Forestry Association; the Rev. A. H. Scott, Perth, Canada, representing the Ontario Horticulture Association; and Lord and Lady Aberdeen of Scotland, on behalf of the British Civic Workers, extended greetings from their respective organizations.

This evening J. Horace McFarland, Harrisburg, Pa., president of the American Civic Association, will make his annual address on "What Shall We Do With Niagara?"

Other speakers tonight will be: Enos Mill, Estes Park, Colo.; Mrs. John Dickinson Sherman, Chicago; Gilbert H. Grosvenor, Washington; R. B. Marshall, Washington; Richard B. Watrous, Washington; Dr. H. O. Reik, Baltimore, and Robert S. Yard, of the interior department.

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KEEP BALL IN MIDDLE OF FIELD

Five Important Events in War History of Year from French Viewpoint; Germans Fail to Get Touchdown

WIN BY WEARING OUT ENEMY IS PLAN

Joffre in Supreme Command; Three Big Drives Test Teutonic Line; Decisive Action by Next Fall

By WILLIAM PHILIP SIMMS,
U. P. staff correspondent.

PARIS, Dec. 28.—Five significant events punctuated the year just drawing to a close as seen from the French point of view: The battle of Champagne, the Balkan muddle, the change of governments, the creation of an inter-allied war council and the nomination of General Joffre as Commander-in-Chief of all the French armies, whatever the theater of operations.

On the whole France regards the past year as one without brilliance so far as she or the allies are concerned. Her victories have been rather negative. While her enemy has been making some great runs around the ends she and those fighting with her, have succeeded in keeping the ball pretty well in the middle of the field. The first half of the game seems about over, the Teutons have the ball but there have been no touchdowns. That is about the way the common sense Frenchman sizes up the situation at the close of 1915.

The battle of Champagne was important because it was the very first battle to be fought under present trench-perfect conditions; it gave the French soldier a proper measure of the enemy and a proper measure of himself. Though no important strategic point was gained by this victory, undoubtedly it will have its effect on 1916 operations, because it settled several important points.

The inter-allied war council leads Frenchmen to believe that the mistakes of the past are not likely to be repeated; from now on they have determined that the war plans of the allies will dovetail and that the coming year will register some real results.

The Balkan muddle has given France more anxiety, perhaps, than any other war phase during 1915. Frenchmen openly admit failure there both diplomatically and militarily. Greece three times offered to join the allies, once even before the battle of the Marne in 1914, but each time she was refused admission. Then, when the allies had fallen down at the Dardanelles and in Bulgaria, and asked her to come in, she had changed her mind. It is admitted in certain circles that had France and the allies acted in concert and at the proper time, there is not the slightest doubt that Greece would have led the dance, that Bulgaria and Roumania would today be fighting on the allies' side and that the multi-colored flags of Germany's opponents would today be floating over the minarets of Constantinople.

The resignation of Theophile Delcasse, considered one of the greatest of Frenchmen, from the office of minister of foreign affairs, was due uniquely to the Balkan developments. Some say he opposed the sending of troops to Salonika; others declare he long ago advocated Big Stick methods in the Near East and that because his diplomacy there was not strongly enough backed up, King Ferdinand joined hands with the Kaiser instead of with the allies. Take your choice. Whatever his reasons for resigning, his departure was the occasion of a complete reorganization of the government. Premier Rene Viviani resigning to make way for M. Aristide Briand. The presence of M. Briand as prime minister is significant. He is known as a man of action, of initiative and strong measures.

The nomination of General Joffre as supreme generalissimo of all the French troops means two things: first that Joffre will have absolute authority in disposing his armies and plan-

(Continued on Page Three.)